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United States Government Accountability Office
Washington, DC 20548

May 22, 2006

The Honorable John Conyers, Jr.
Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary
United States House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Conyers:

Concerning your letter of September 1, 2005 to the Comptroller General requesting a GAO study of the Bureau of Justice Statistics' (BJS) Police-Public Contact Surveys and the National Institute of Justice's (NIJ) grant awards, we met with your staff, Mr. Keenan Keller, on May 17, 2006, to gain a further understanding of your needs.

Due to the extensive BJS/NIJ procedural documentation to be collected, the several federal agency statistical guidelines to be obtained, and the necessity to develop appropriate measurement indicators, we need to proceed with a separate design phase. The purpose of this letter is to set forth the study objectives and provide you with a completion date for the design phase. We agreed that the overall objectives will be to (1) assess changes over time in the scope, methodology, and conclusions of the Police-Public Contact Surveys (PPCS); (2) determine whether BJS was adhering to various federal guidelines in publicizing the completion and conclusions of the latest PPCS; (3) identify BJS procedural changes in political appointees' oversight roles with respect to report review and release; and (4) provide descriptive information on NIJ funded grants since January 2001.

The design phase will be completed by July 31, 2006. We will remain in contact with your staff and keep them informed of our progress. At the end of the design phase, we will provide you with a projected completion date for the total study. Should you have any questions, please contact me on (202) 512-4523, or Evi Rezmovic, Assistant Director, on (202) 512-2580.

Sincerely yours,

Brian Lepore
Acting Director, Homeland Security and Justice